



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MIDLAND ACCOUNTANT PLEADS GUILTY TO BANK FRAUD, IDENTITY THEFT

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that this morning in federal court in Midland, Dina Clarise Smith, 38, a former accountant at Elms, Faris and Company of Midland, pleaded guilty to committing a bank fraud and identity theft scheme that allowed her to embezzle approximately \$214,000 from the bank account of one of her clients.

In her plea before United States Magistrate Judge Jeffrey C. Manske, Smith admitted that from approximately October 2006 through approximately August 2008, she used her accounting position to repeatedly write forged checks to herself on the bank account of Midland Pathology, a medical practice that was one of her clients. In doing so, she forged the signatures of one of three doctors who were duly authorized to sign such checks. Smith then endorsed the forged checks and deposited them into her own personal account.

Smith was terminated by Elms, Faris and Company when her actions were uncovered.

When she is sentenced in April, Smith faces up to 30 years in prison and a \$ 1 million fine on the bank fraud charge. In addition, she must serve a mandatory two year sentence on the identity theft charge that federal law requires be made consecutive to, or "stacked" on, whatever sentence she receives for the bank fraud violation. Federal law also requires that Smith be ordered to pay full restitution for the money she embezzled.

The case was investigated by the Midland Police Department, with the full cooperation of Elms, Faris and Company. Assistant United States Attorney Kerry Anne Fleck is prosecuting the matter for the Government.

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